

NOAA-Fisheries 2004 Atlantic salmon Postsmolt Survey: Penobscot Bay, ME

NOAA-Fisheries is planning to conduct a surface pairtrawl survey to sample Atlantic salmon postsmolts in Penobscot Bay and the Gulf of Maine starting May 6th. This sampling program has been approved by the Maine Technical Advisory Committee and is specifically permitted by NOAA-Fisheries and the Maine Department of Marine Resources.

The sampling program will be conducted from two-leased commercial fishing vessels, the F/V Nobska (pictured left, Registration # - 932694) and the F/V Morue (pictured right, Registration # - 963865).



Each vessel is approximately 90 feet and is staffed with personnel with vast fishing experience and specific experience in pair trawling. In fact, these two vessels conducted the 2001 and 2003 surveys within Penobscot Bay. These vessels will work together to tow a pelagic net (opening 80m wide, 10m depth) at the surface in an attempt to capture juvenile Atlantic salmon as they migrate out of the Penobscot River and Bay. The cod end of the trawl is fitted with a Norwegian-designed aluminum aquarium to capture fish alive. Captured juvenile salmon will be examined for external marks/tags, weighted, measured, sampled for genetics, have a scale sample taken for ageing and determining if it is wild or hatchery origin, have a blood and gill sample taken and then the fish will be released alive.

This is the fourth year of this survey. In the past there has been minimal interactions with any fixed gear within the bay. We will do everything in our ability to ensure that this is the case for 2004. If concentrations of fixed gear are located within a target trawl area, we will simply move our trawl path so as not to interfere with this gear. If we do entangle and retrieve fixed gear and we can determine its original location we will reset the trap noting the trap ID, location and time set. If we do not know the original location, we will store the trap on board and contact the owner to arrange for delivery. If we only retrieve part of the set, we will identify the owner and compensate for lost gear. Again, based on past performance, we expect little to no interactions with fixed gear and will do everything we can to avoid it.

The sampling is scheduled to start on May 6th and will proceed for approximately 20-25 days. All sampling will occur during daylight hours and generally in waters exceeding 50 feet. Nights will be spent in Rockland, ME. The primary area of focus will be within Penobscot Bay: from Sears Island to south of Matinicus Island along both the east and west arms of the Bay.

For more information, please contact:

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